

[SERMON NOTES]

The Church of Sardis (*Revelation 3:1-6*)

Reputation is no _____ of future _____.

Don't get _____ being a ' _____ ' Christian. (*Colossians 2:13*)

Walking _____ with Christ means we are _____ in Christ. (*1 John 1:5-7*)

Do I believe closeness to _____ is a reward?

[QUICK REVIEW]

Looking at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

[MY STORY]

Our culture presents us with many ways to curate and maintain a reputation and image. We find ourselves having to live up to something in order to be somebody. Whether that's a different title at work, a newer car, or the annual dream vacation - the world tells you one must build a reputation and then live up to it. ***If someone were to associate your reputation with a brand or company - what would it be and why?***

Keeping up a reputation is easier said than done; but will definitely result in many things beneath the surface from pride and control to stress to anxiety and fear. Perhaps more importantly, Jesus spoke out against a group of religious leaders (called "Pharisees") whose reputation was well-known as being spiritual, but their hearts would reveal otherwise. ***Read Matthew 23:27-28. What is the phrase(s) Jesus uses to depict this group? And why do you think Jesus chose that figure of speech?***

[DIGGING DEEPER]

In this week's message, we talked about being close to Christ as the true reward we receive as we follow Jesus with our lives. Sometimes, the Bible calls this being "clothed with Christ." Basically, it means that following Jesus should result in Christ-like living. Take a moment to read ***Galatians 5:1-26 and Colossians 3:1-17. Write out all the various adjectives you see for living in the flesh and for living according to the Spirit. Then,***

(circle) one adjective you think is regularly evident in your life and underline another you need to see expressed more.

Sometimes, as a disciple, we probably are unaware of times and places we already are walking close with Christ! **Take some time to think of 2-3 times/places you would say you already experience closeness to Christ. (ex: small group time)**

David was known as a man after God's own heart. For most of us, we think of him as the shepherd boy who slayed the giant Goliath and/or the king who made the poor choices with Bathsheba and Uriah. Despite his ups and downs, he carried the same moniker and wrote many of the Psalms expressing his closeness with God. **Read each psalm and write out how closeness with God is expressed differently each time.**

Psalm 23

Psalm 39

Psalm 51

What can you learn or take away from these various expressions of closeness with God? How might they challenge what closeness with God looks like?

If we are faithful to see closeness with Christ as the best reward, we will see change within us! **Where or in what ways do you desire to be closer to Christ in the coming months?**

[WEEKLY READINGS]

Studies say that someone who reads their Bible 4 times or more a week improves their joy, happiness, contentment, and overall approval of their life. (1 Tim. 4:8-10,16; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). As a church, we believe that! Below are 4 passages of Scripture this week to dive into to pull deeper on our weekend's message. We encourage you to take notes in your Bible, and ask yourself: *What does this teach me about God? Myself and others? And how do I follow Jesus better?*

1 John 1

1 John 2

1 John 3

1 John 4

1 John 5